

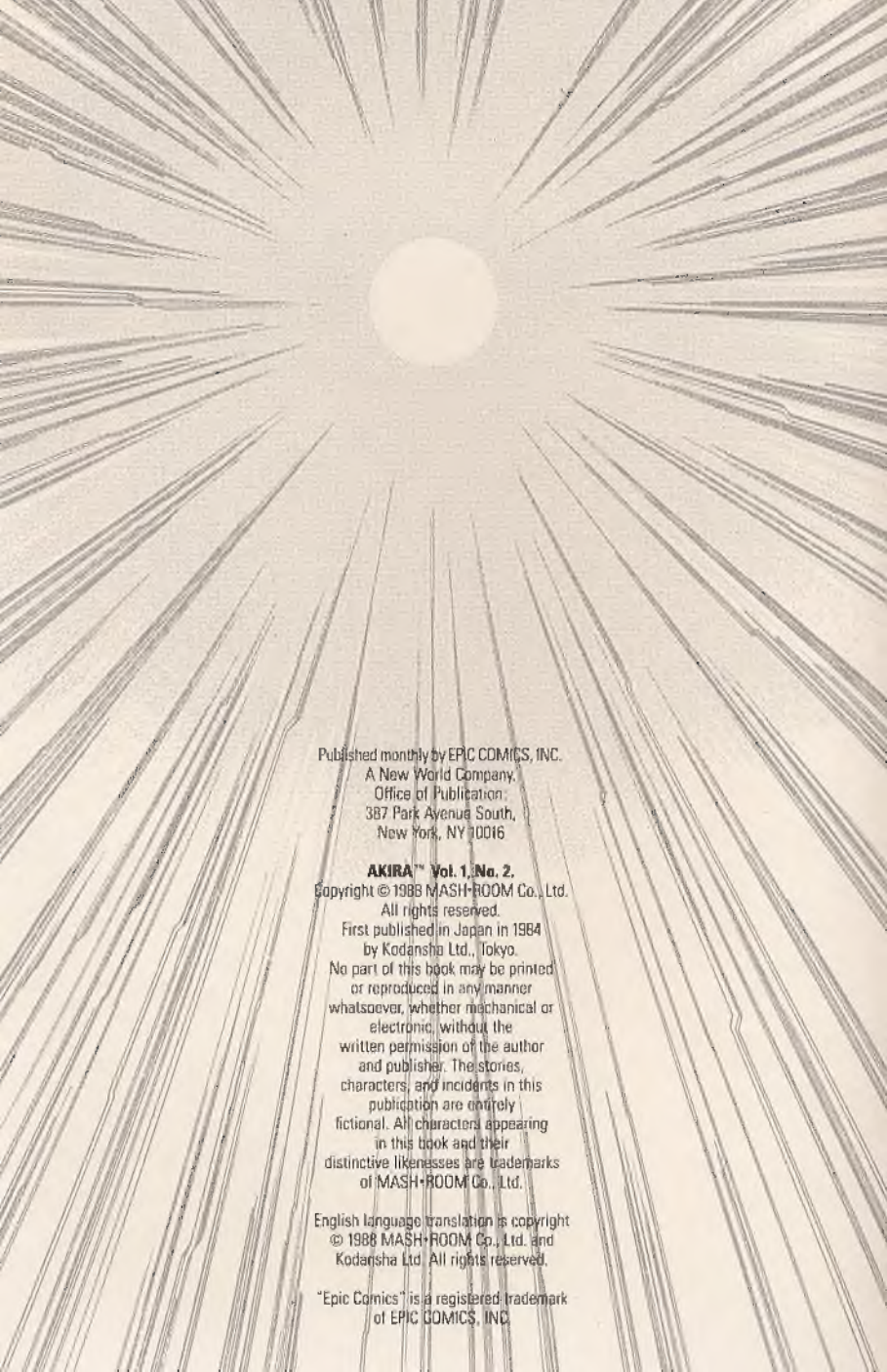
# AKIRA 2™



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO



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# AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 2

## PURSUIT

## WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

**T**he year is 2030. The world is rebuilding from World War III. In **Neo-Tokyo**, plans are being made to hold the next Olympics in the "old city"—where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

**Kaneda** and his friends—teenaged delinquents from the local vocational school—have made an unauthorized motorcycle run into the old city to check out the site and found far more than they expected. In an area said to be totally deserted, they encounter a strange, wizened-faced child, known only as **Number 26**. He is terrified of something and is possessed of extraordinary telekinetic abilities. During the encounter, the paranormal boy gravely injures **Tetsuo**, one of Kaneda's close friends. Then, he vanishes.

Kaneda's gang find themselves in trouble with the authorities following the incident, and learn, to their surprise, that the "police" they encountered after the accident were not normal officers, but part of some secret concern. Moreover, **Tetsuo**, who they believed had been taken to a hospital, has disappeared.

The next night, at **Harukiya**, a tough local dive, **Kaneda** brazenly attempts to pick up **Kay**, a strange girl who catches his fancy. **Kay**, however, is not interested. In fact, she and her companion, **Ryu**, are part of an underground resistance organization, dedicated to learning what is happening in the old city and putting a stop to it.

During the mayhem that ensues, both the delinquents and the resistance fighters again encounter **Number 26**, and again he uses his powers, to catastrophic effect. Both groups are scattered, but first **Ryu** and then **Kaneda** re-encounter **Number 26**. Ryu attempts to reassure the paranormal boy, but **Kaneda** is anxious to punish him for injuring **Tetsuo**.

As they argue, the mysterious soldiers pursuing **Number 26** reach the scene, armed and ready.



Kaneda



Number 26



Kay



Tetsuo





**WHAM**

**AFTER THEM!!**

**DAMN!!**



**BLAM**

**HUNH--?**



**BLAM  
BLAM**



**K-ZING  
ZING  
ZING**

**DON'T  
SHOOT!  
I'M NOT  
THE ONE  
YOU'RE  
AFTER!!**



**OH!!!  
NO!!!**











THUNK

WHOA--!



BLAM

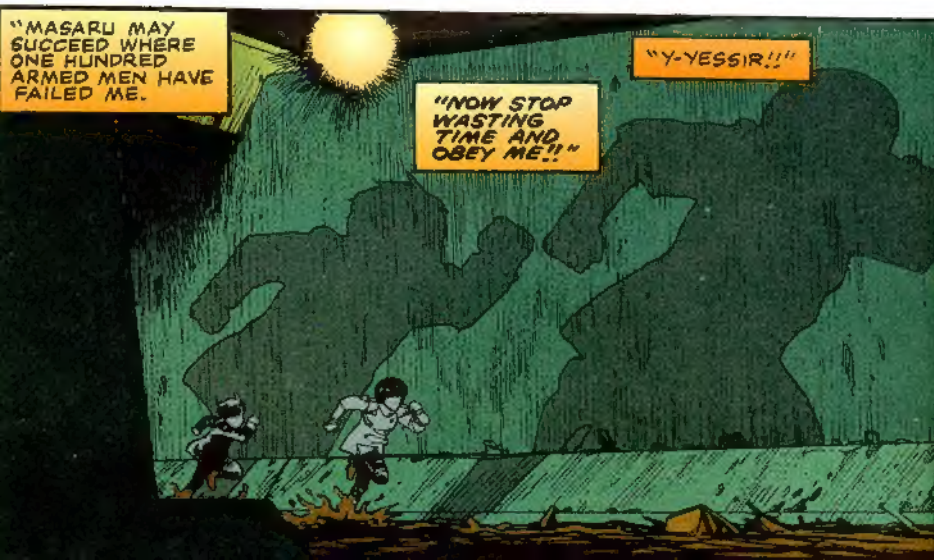
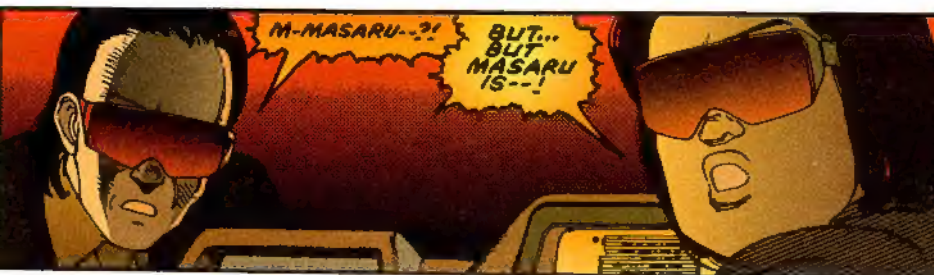
THEY'RE  
IN THE  
SHOPPING  
CENTER!

CIRCLE  
AROUND THE  
OTHER  
SIDE AND  
CUT THEM  
OFF!













OH!!



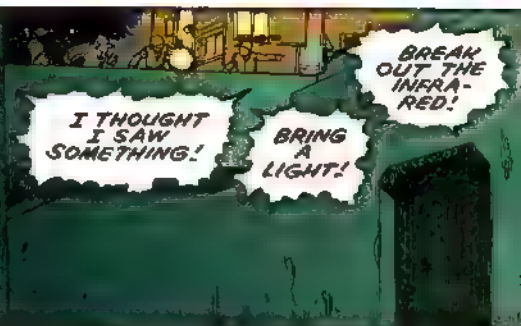
THIS WAY!  
QUICKLY!



PUFF

PUFF

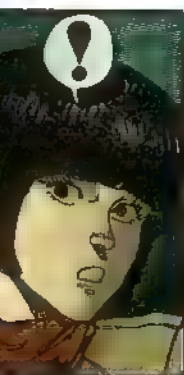
PUFF



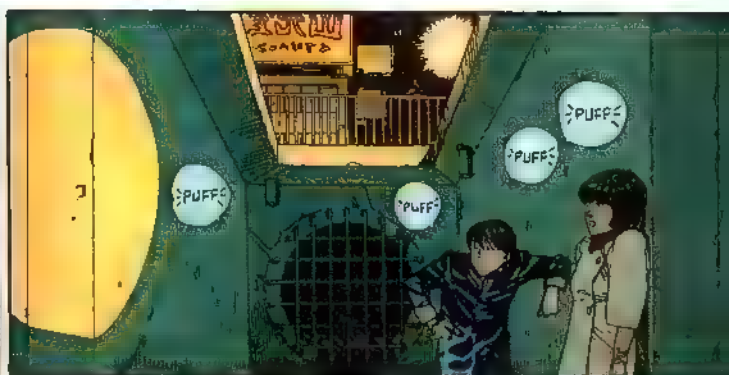
I THOUGHT  
I SAW  
SOMETHING!

BRING  
A  
LIGHT!

BREAK  
OUT THE  
INFRA-  
RED!



!

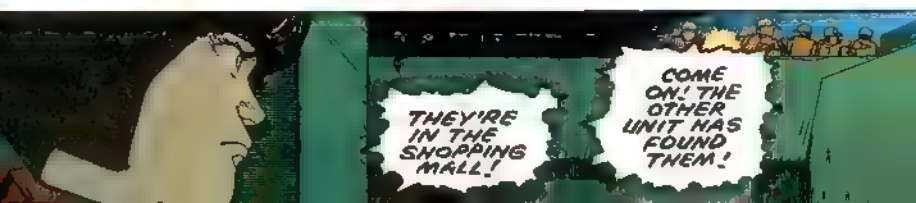


PUFF

PUFF

PUFF

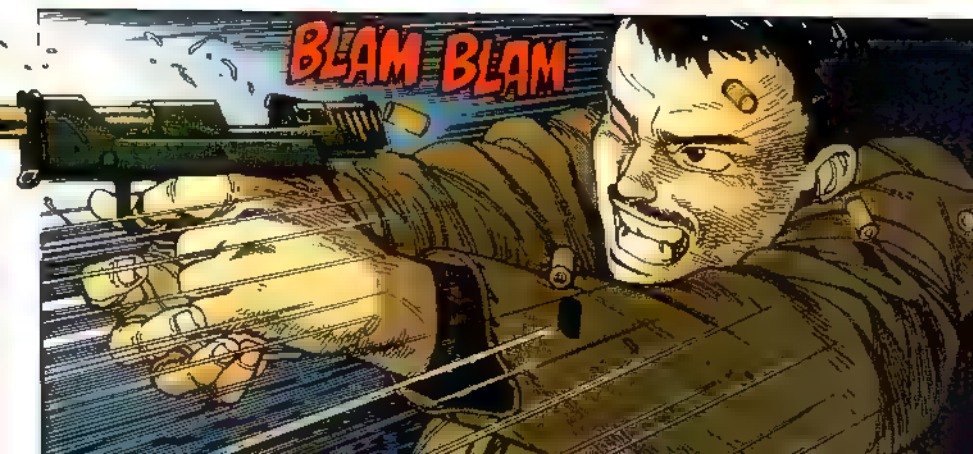
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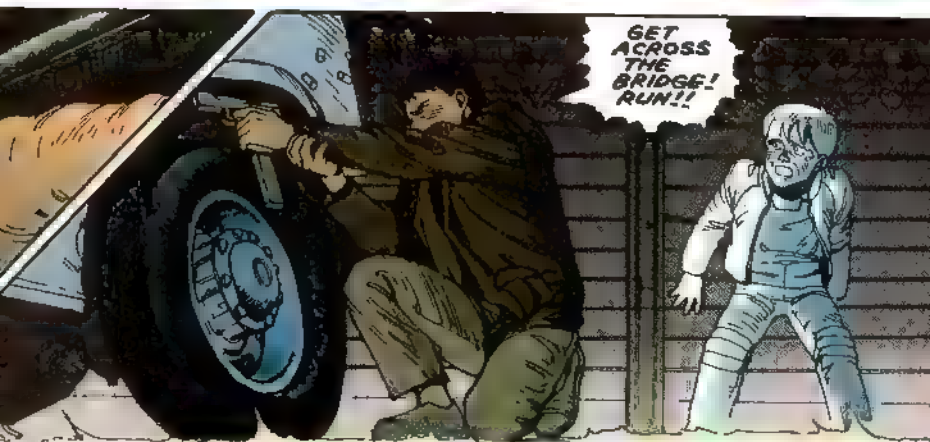
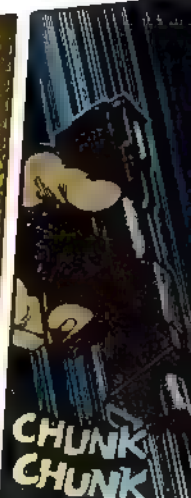
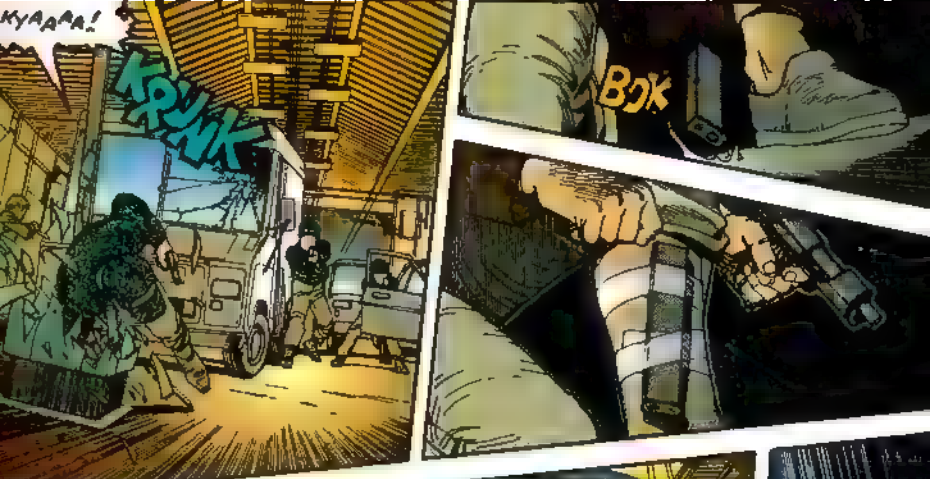


THEY'RE  
IN THE  
SHOPPING  
MALL!

COME  
ON! THE  
OTHER  
UNIT HAS  
FOUND  
THEM!







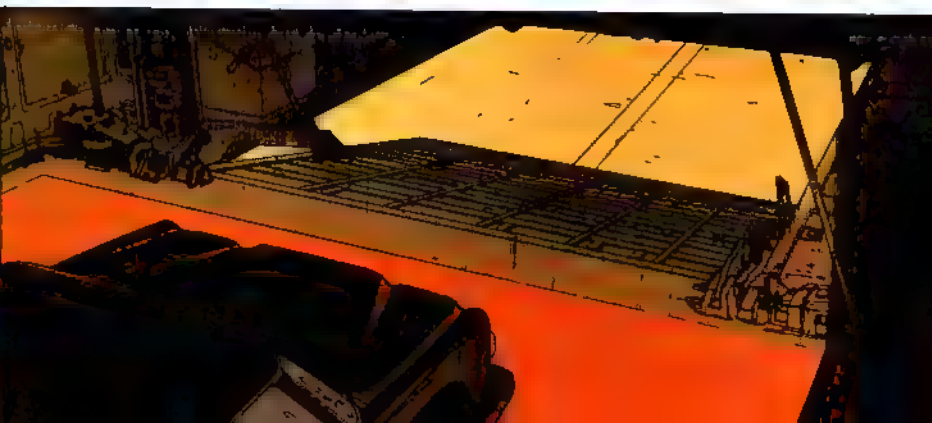
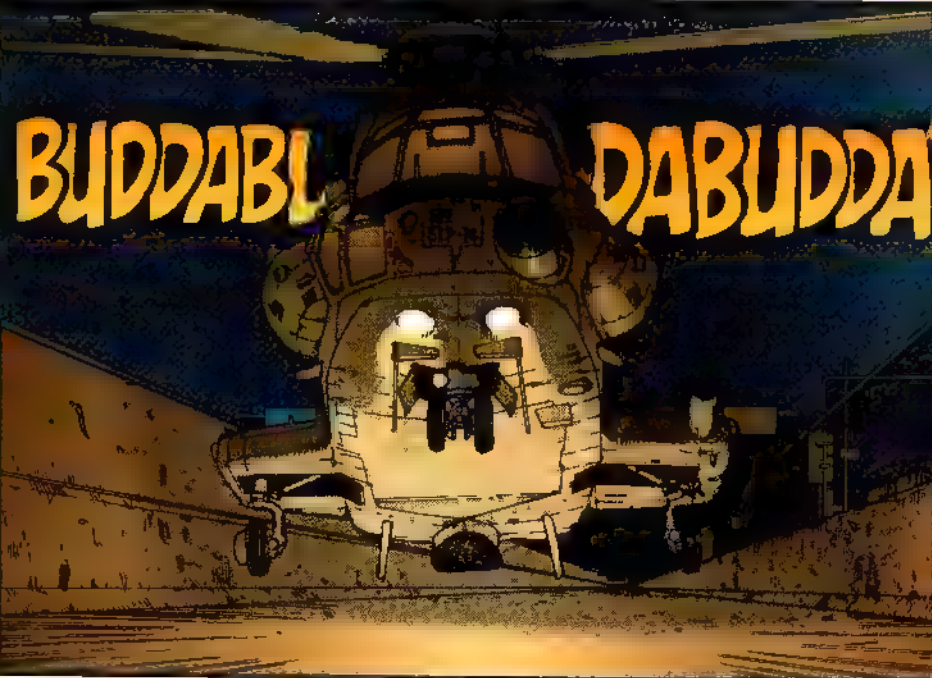
**HALT**

**NO VEHICLES  
PERMITTED PAST  
THIS POINT**

**WARNING**



**BUDDABU DABUDDA**







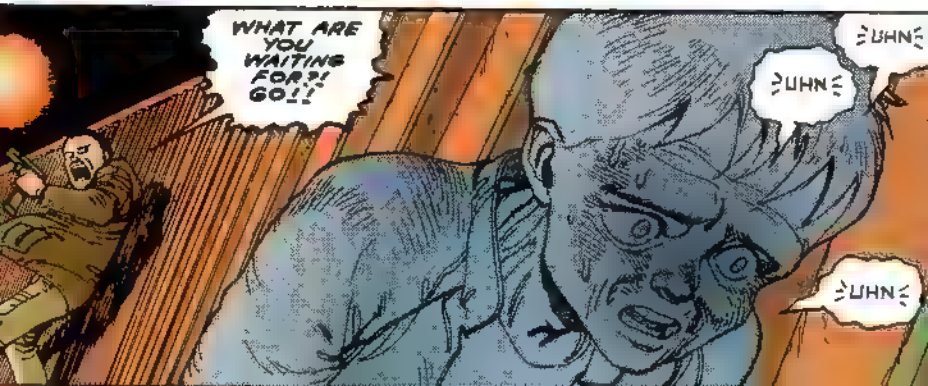
WE'VE RECEIVED  
WORD HE'S PINNED  
DOWN BY THE  
CANAL IN THE  
EIGHTEENTH  
DISTRICT, SIR.



WHEN IS  
MASARU  
EXPECTED?



HIS  
ETA IS  
TWENTY  
MINUTES.

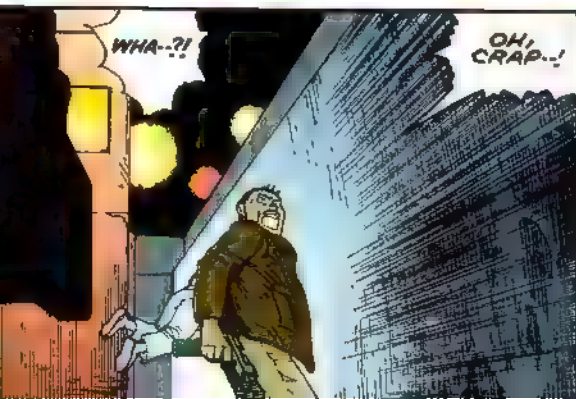
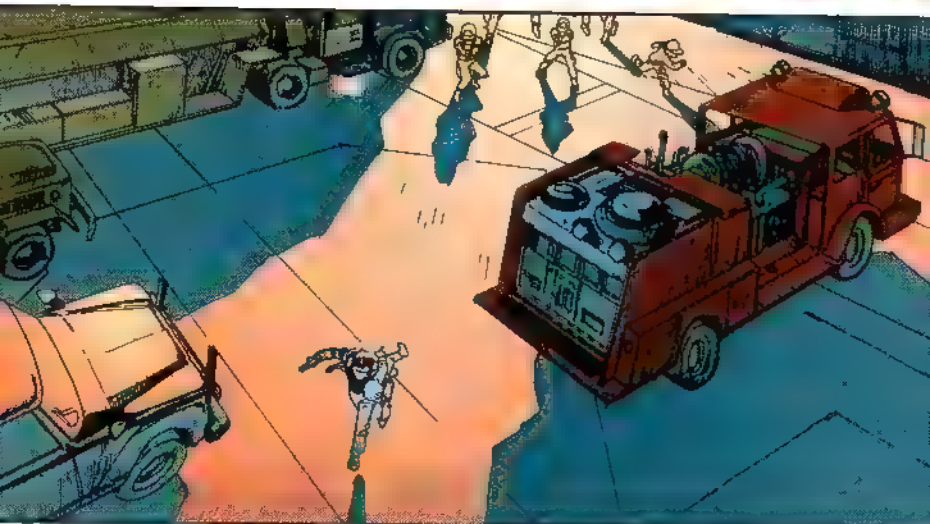


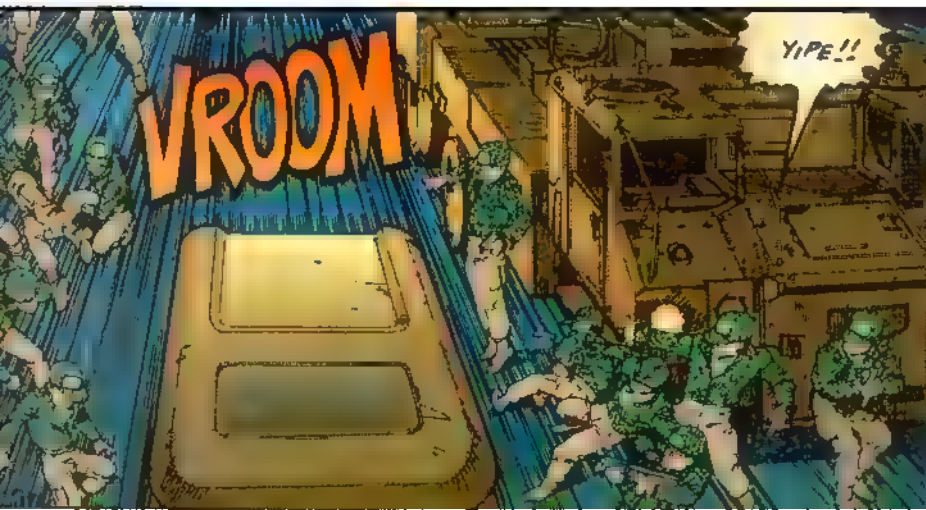
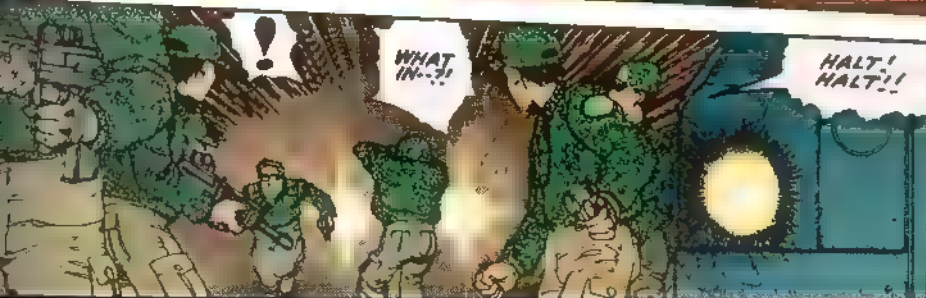
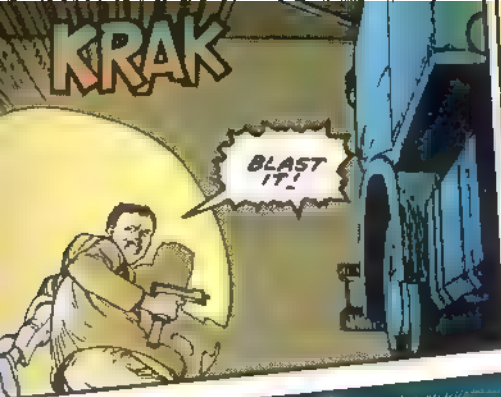
WHAT ARE  
YOU  
WAITING  
FOR?!  
GO!!

UHN

UHN

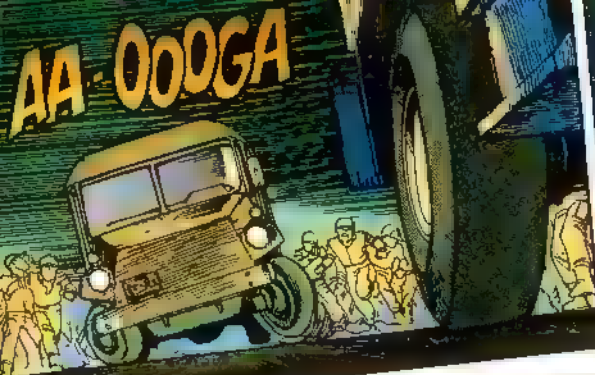
UHN

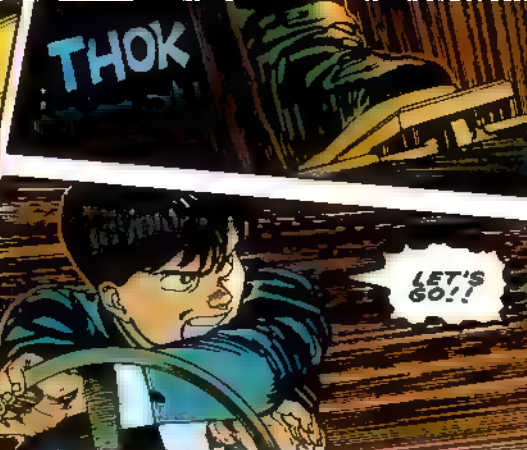
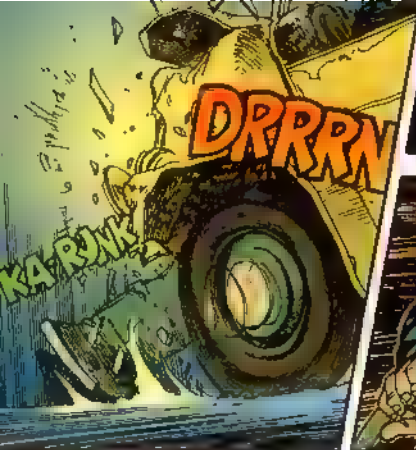


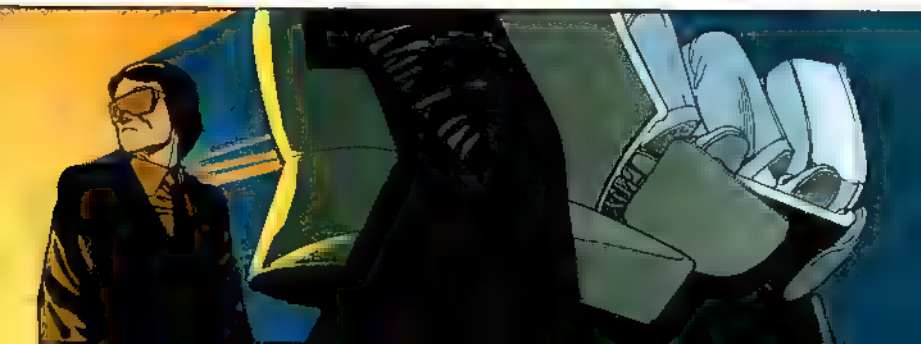
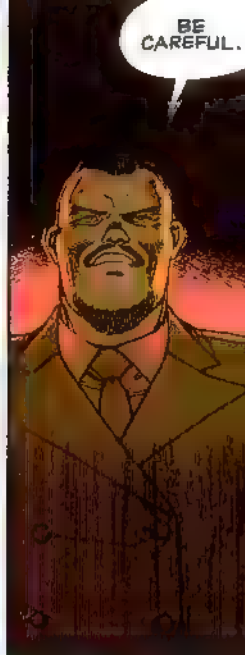
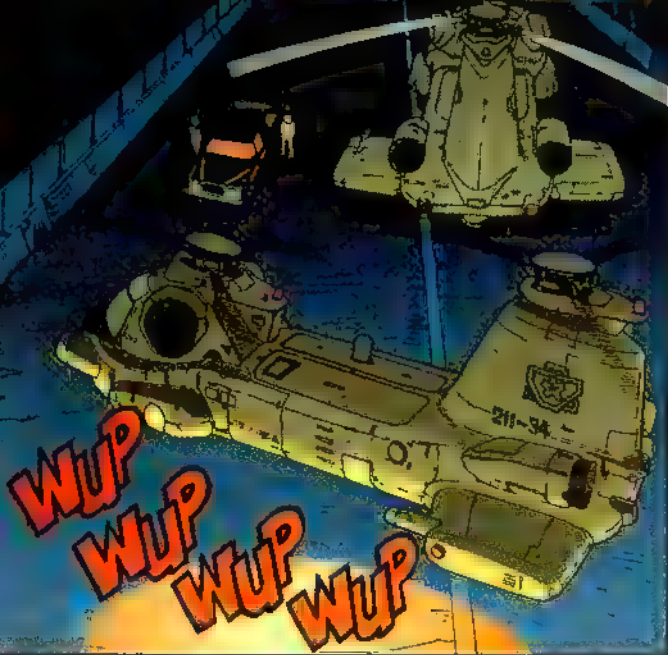




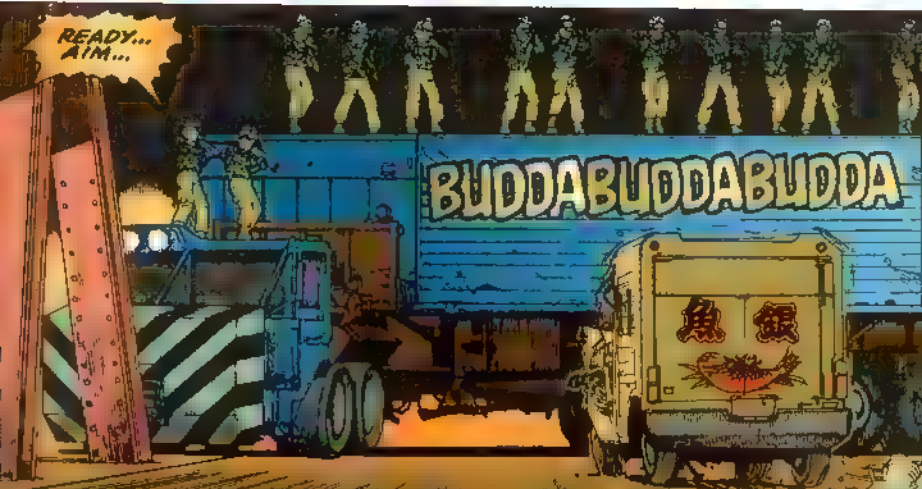
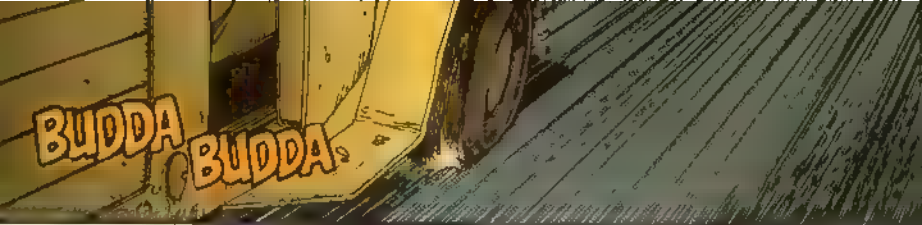
AA-OOOGA



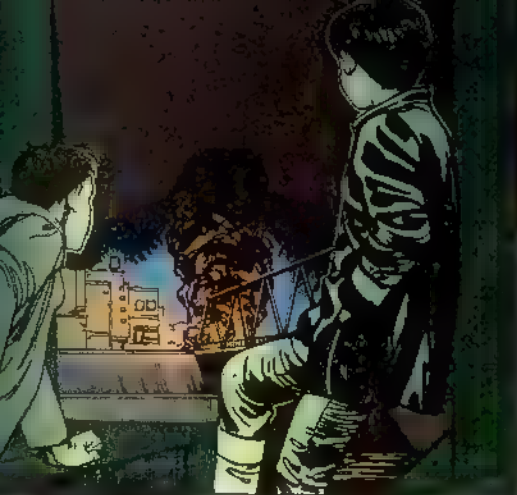












I SUPPOSE  
I OUGHT  
TO THANK  
YOU.



KEEP YOUR  
THANKS,  
MISTER.  
JUST  
REMEMBER  
YOU OWE  
ME ONE.



RIGHT.  
LET'S GET  
OUT OF  
HERE

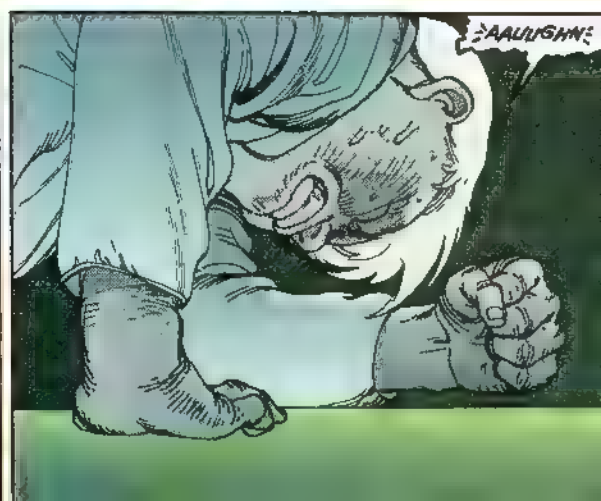


RYU, WAIT  
A MINUTE!  
THERE'S  
SOMETHING  
WRONG WITH  
HIM!

LIKE  
WHAT,  
KAY?

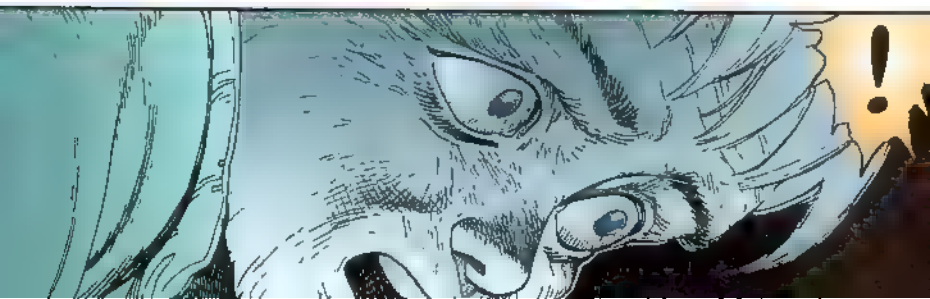
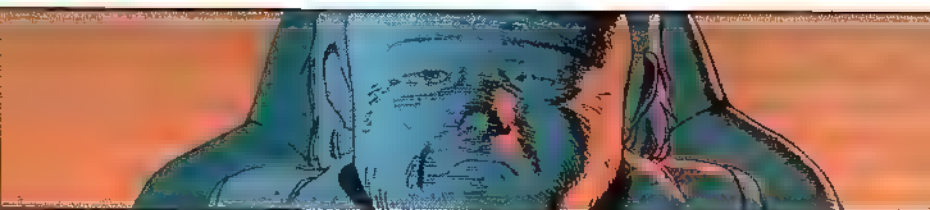
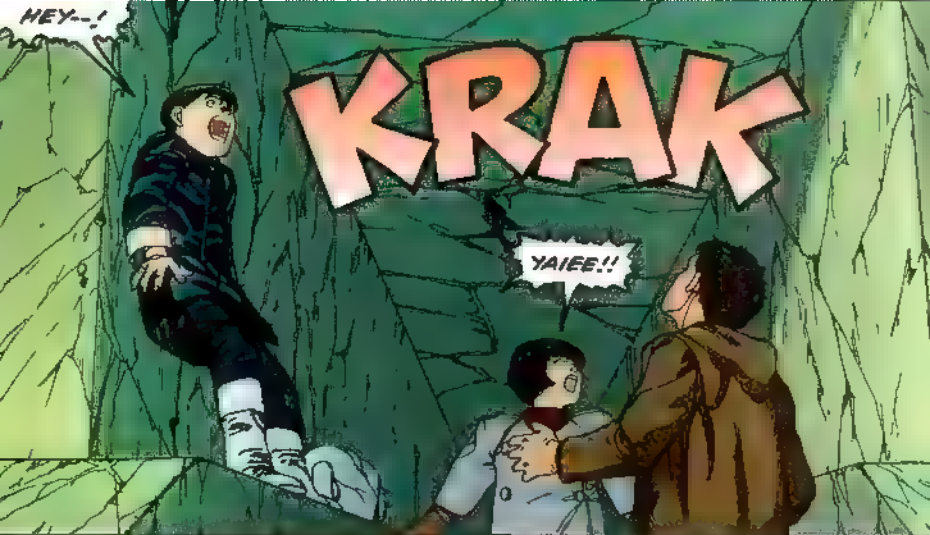


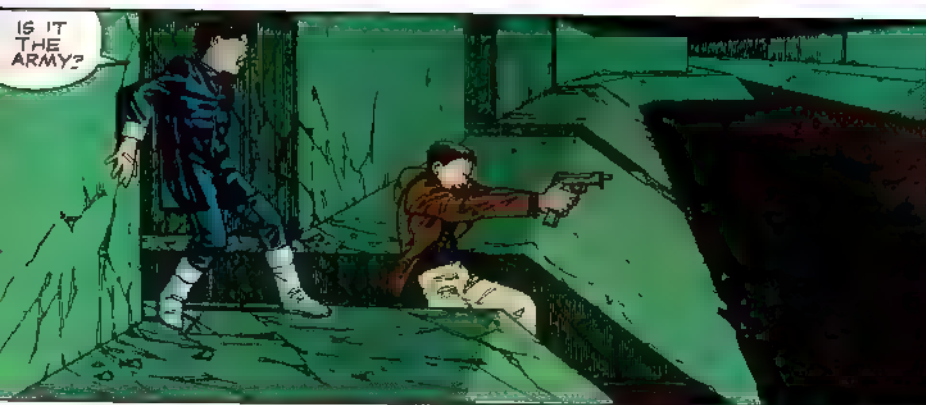
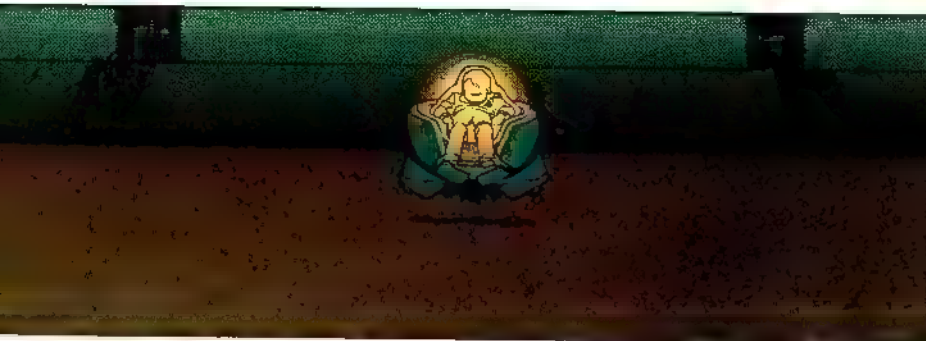
HE'S SWEATING  
AND SHAKING  
LIKE A LEAF

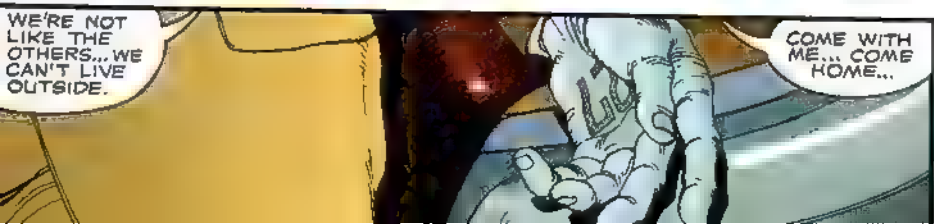
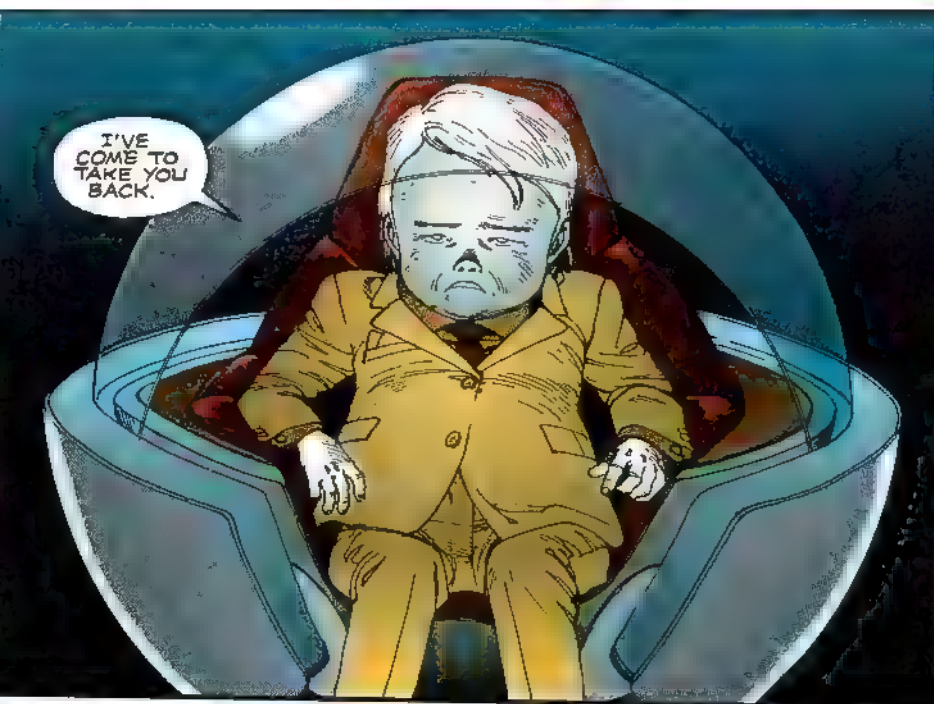


AAARGH!!

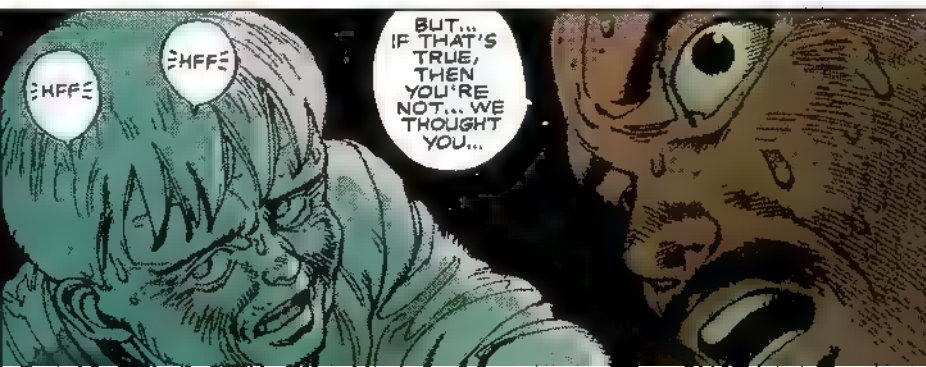




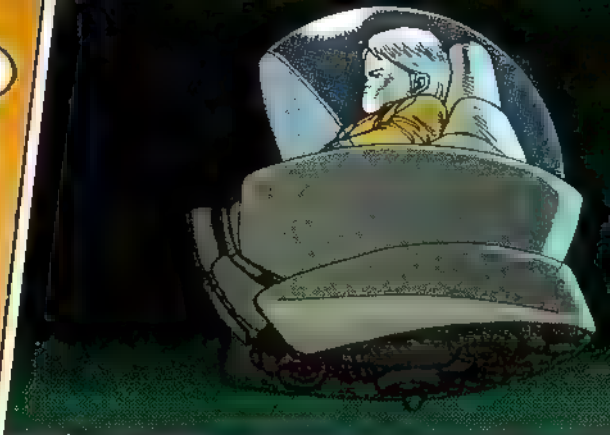




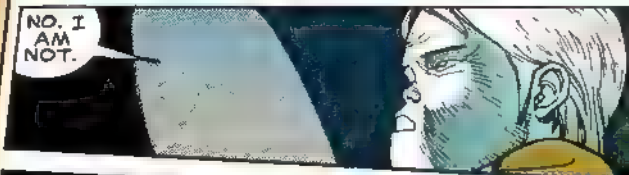




AKIRA...?



NO. I  
AM  
NOT.

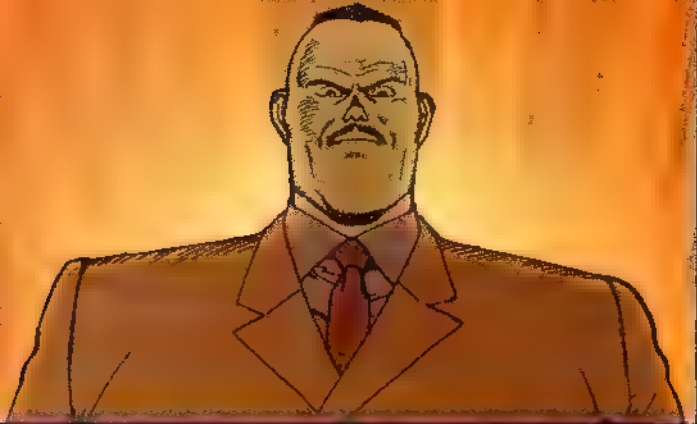


HEY!!

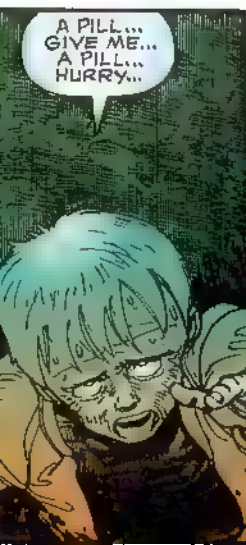
AND JUST  
HOW DID YOU  
LEARN OF  
AKIRA?

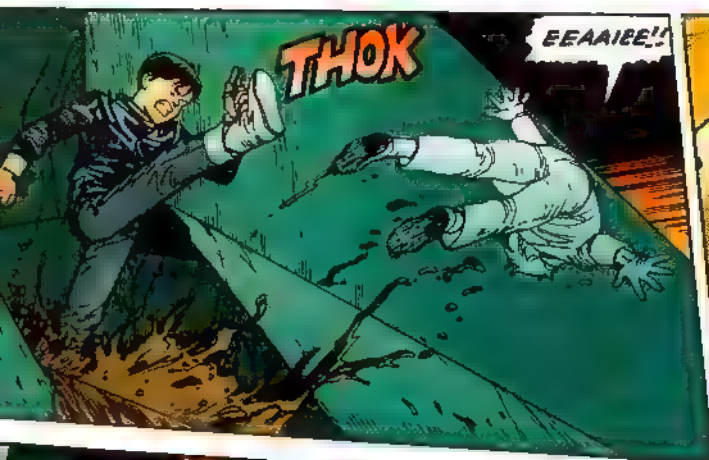
WHO  
ARE  
YOU?!













COLONEL--!



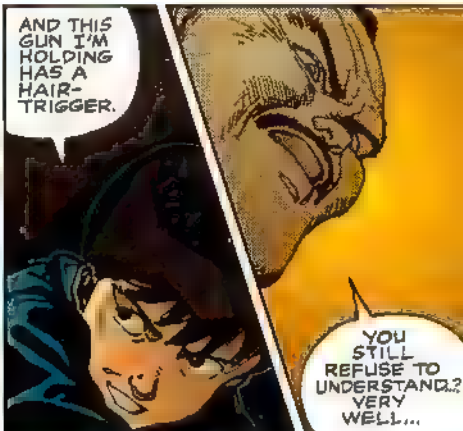
YOU'RE  
BEING  
VERY  
FOOLISH.

I DON'T  
WANNA  
HEAR  
IT!



FOR SOME  
REASON,  
THIS  
LITTLE  
CREEP'S  
IMPORTANT  
TO YOU!

AND THIS  
GUN I'M  
HOLDING  
HAS A  
HAIR-  
TRIGGER.



YOU  
STILL  
REFUSE TO  
UNDERSTAND?  
VERY  
WELL...



MASARU...

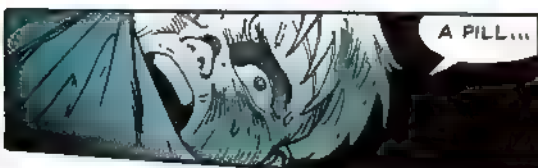
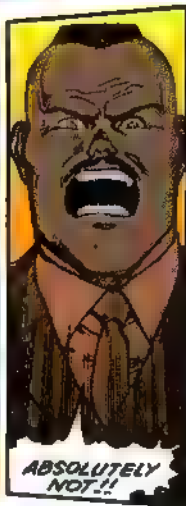
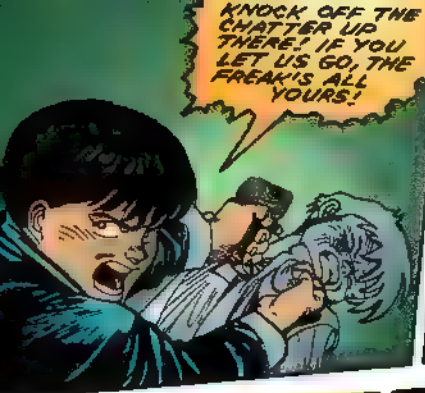


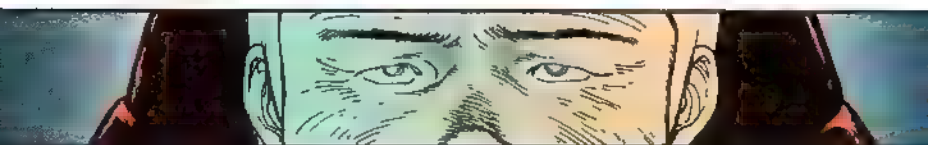
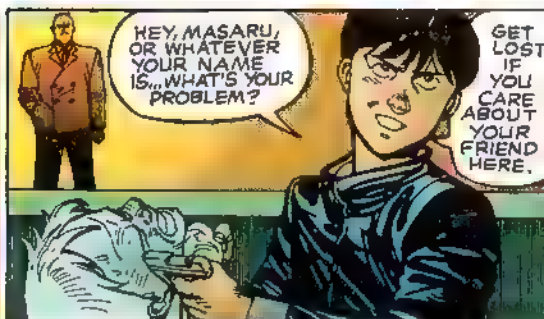
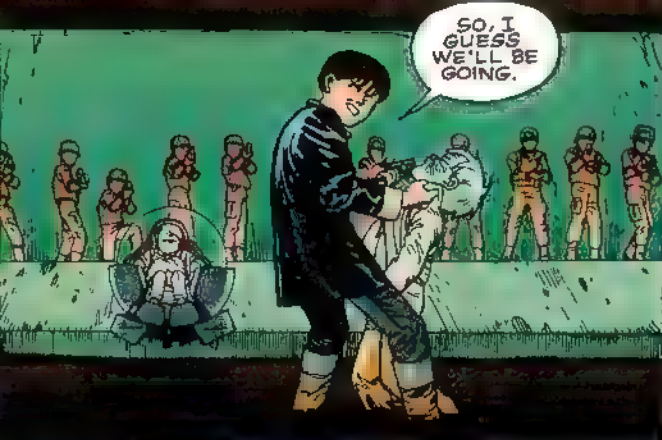
COLONEL...  
TAKASHI  
IS IN A  
VERY BAD  
WAY

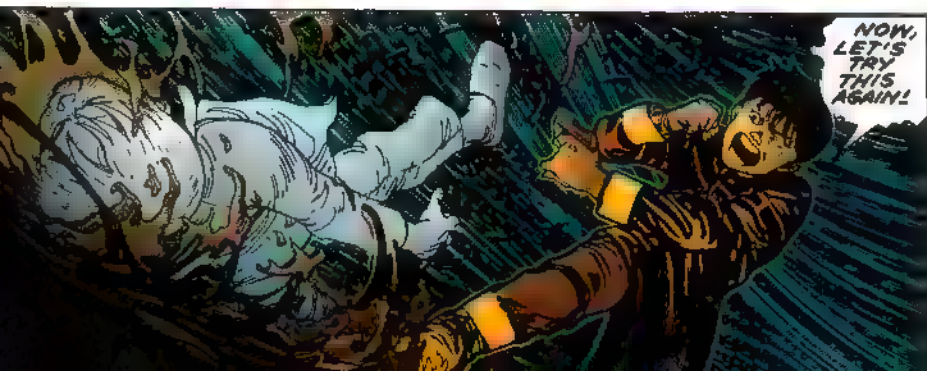
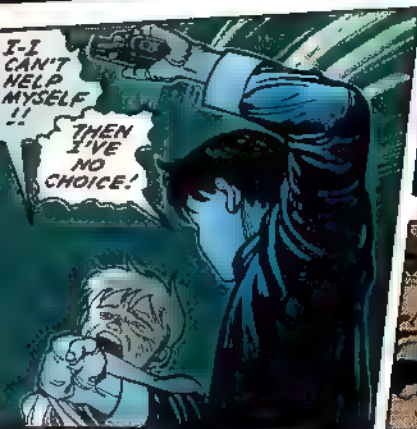
PRECISELY.

SPEED IS  
OF THE  
ESSENCE...  
AND GUNS  
ARE OF  
NO USE  
NOW.



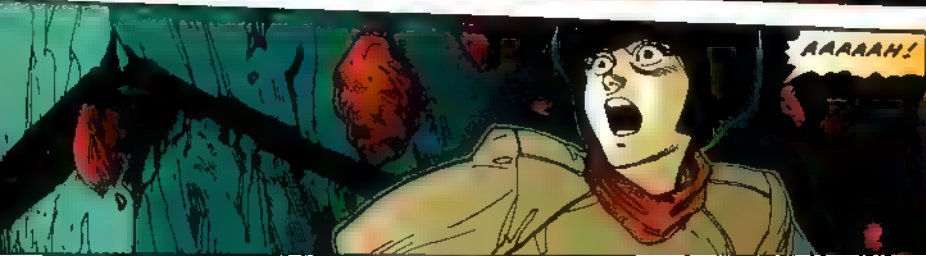
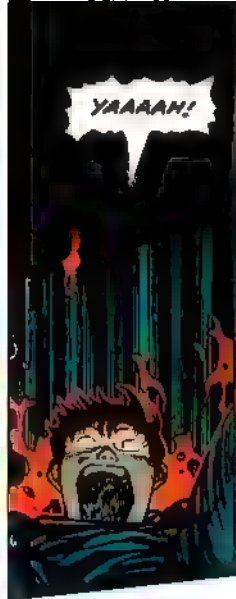












# KROOM

THEY  
MUSTN'T  
ESCAPE!!



GET  
THEM!



SHOOT!

SHOOT!





SPLAT

ICK

KOF  
KOF

Pish

TAKASHI  
YOUR  
PILE--!

CATCH!!

Pit

AH--!!

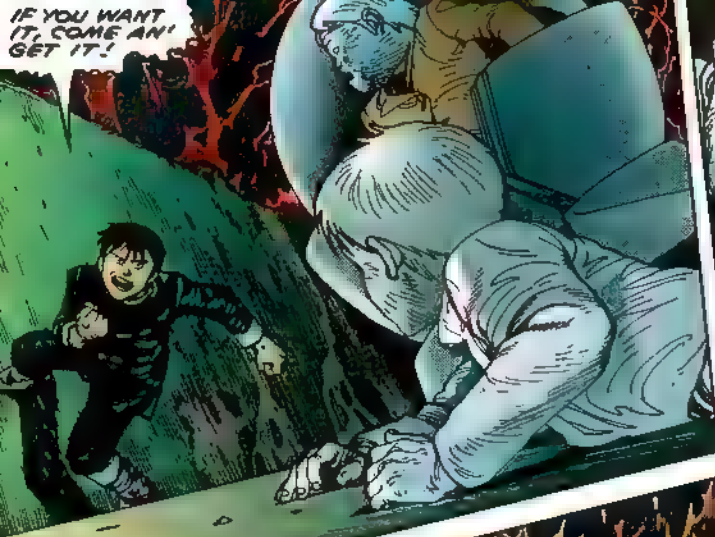
TIK

TAK

THUP

!

IF YOU WANT  
IT, COME AN!  
GET IT!!

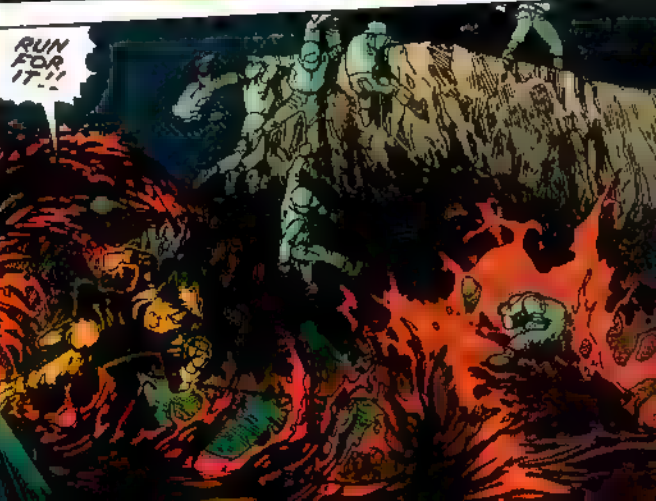


WHOA!

WHAM

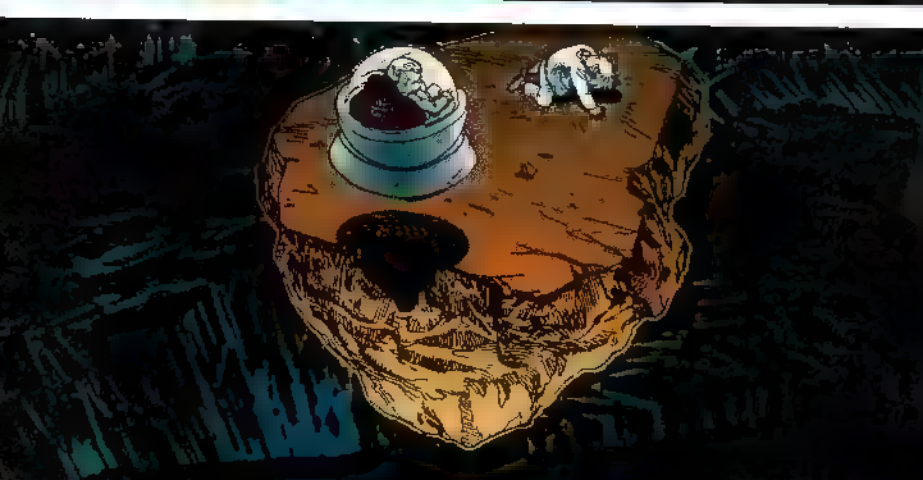
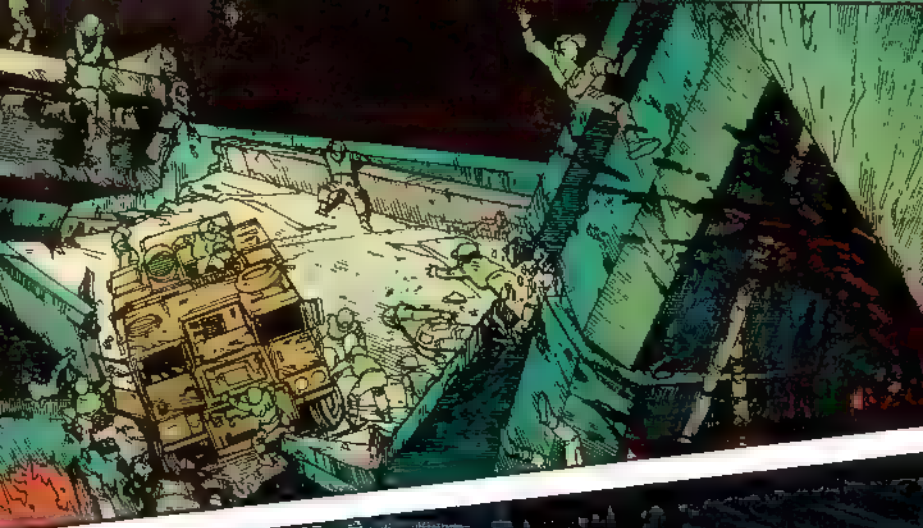


RUN!!



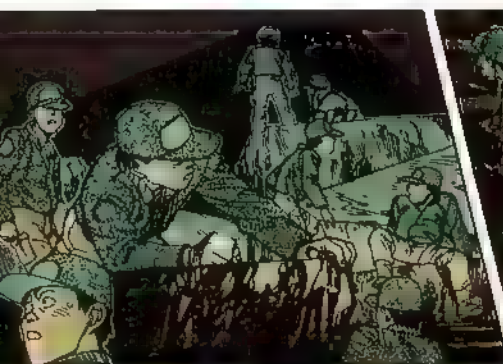
RUN  
FOR  
IT!!

KRAK

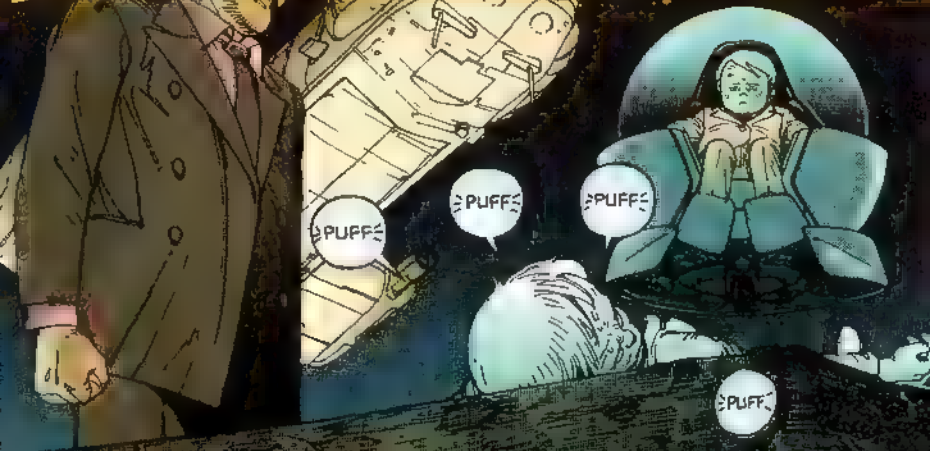


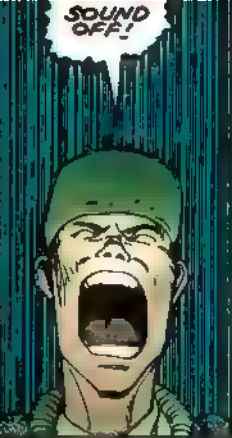




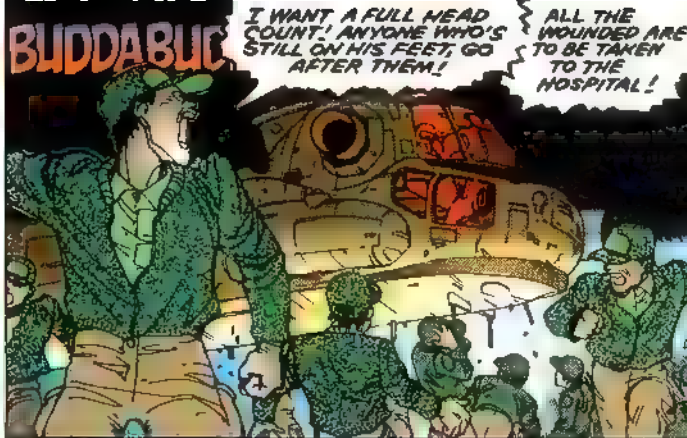


**BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA BUDDA**





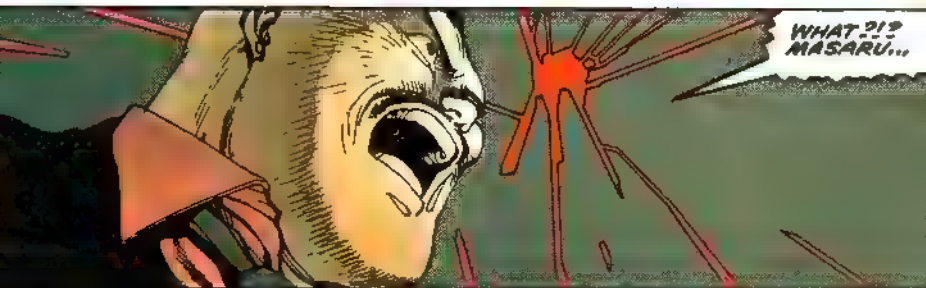
SOUND OFF!



BUDDABUC

I WANT A FULL HEAD COUNT! ANYONE WHO'S STILL ON HIS FEET, GO AFTER THEM!

ALL THE WOUNDED ARE TO BE TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL!



WHAT?!? MASARU...

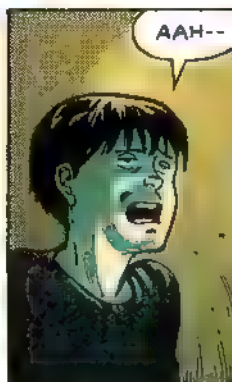


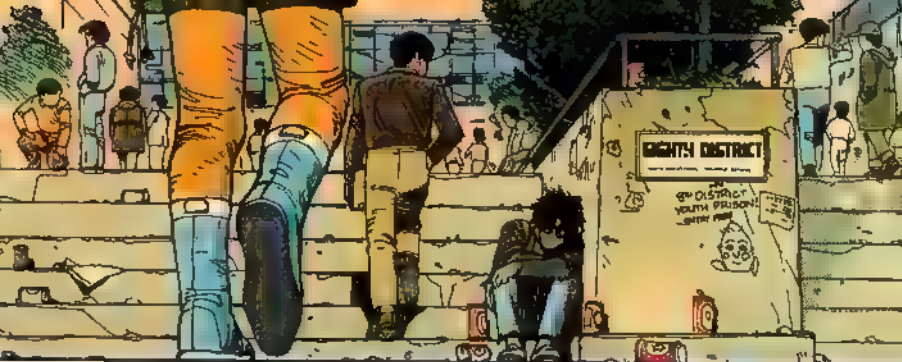
YOU LET HIM... STEAL...

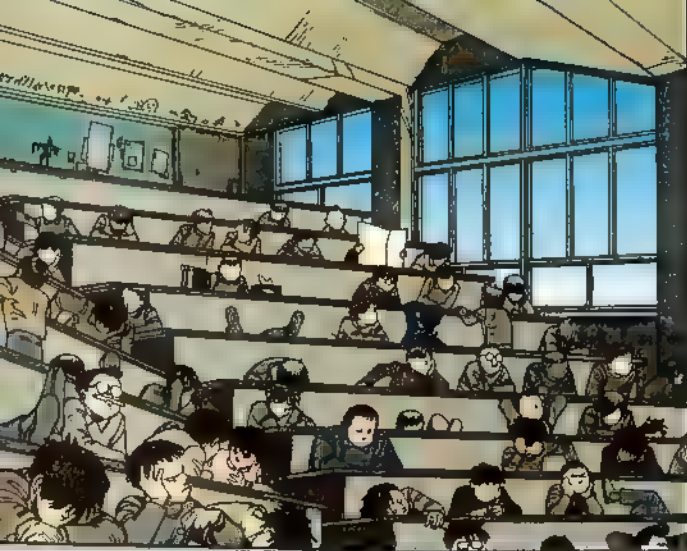


...THE CAPSULE?!







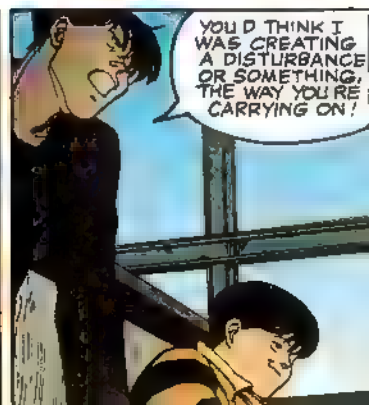
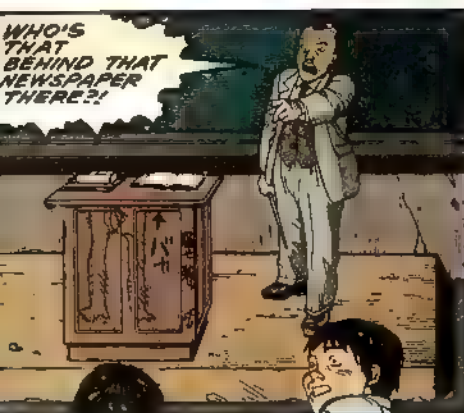


**NATIONAL NEWS**

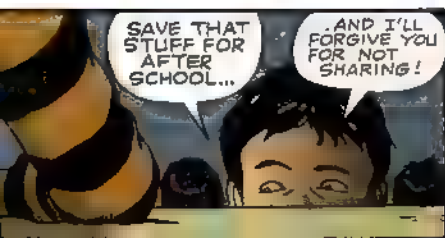
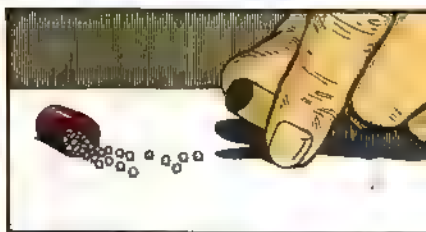
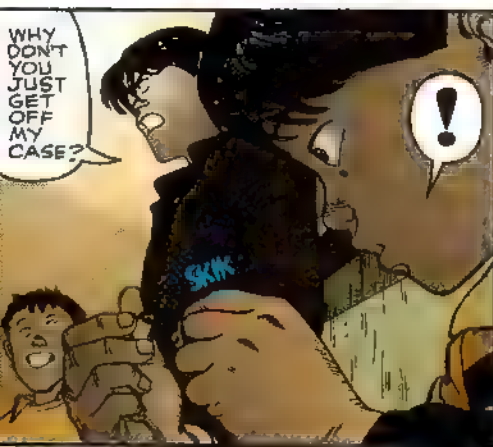
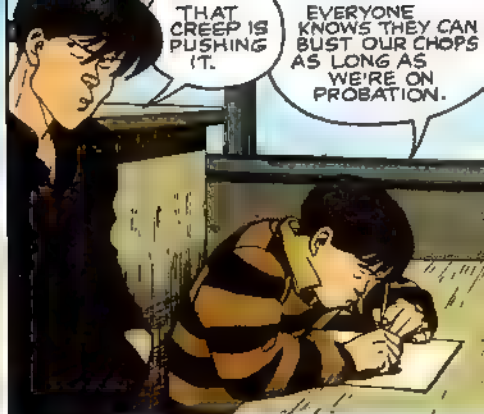
**A WEEK  
AFTER  
EIGHTEENTH  
DISTRICT  
DISASTER,  
CANAL  
REPAIRS  
STILL  
DELAYED**

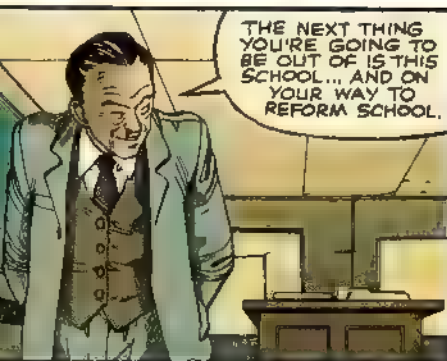
...the de-  
...ter of  
...soulis by  
...ing work  
...ices and  
...power in  
...grow the  
...while the  
...hemlined,  
...concerned  
...ment today  
...arnas. How  
...cross recent  
...ould be pu  
...the appalling  
...kind of unedu-  
...ed as culmi-  
...soners.

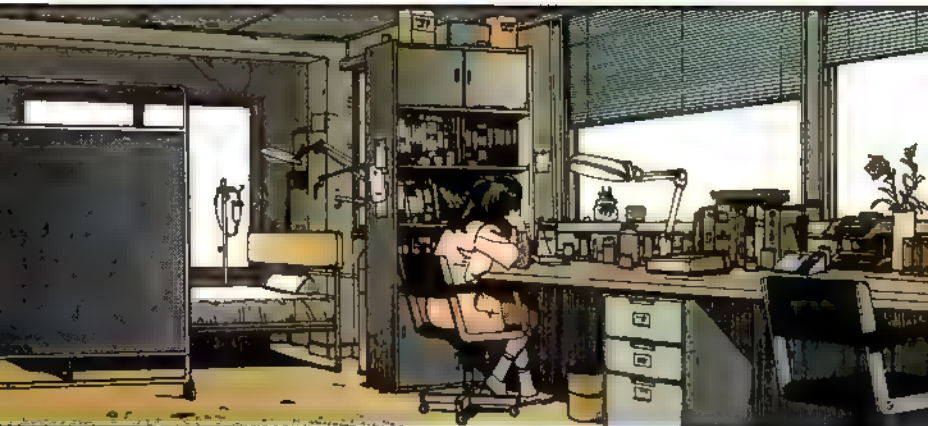
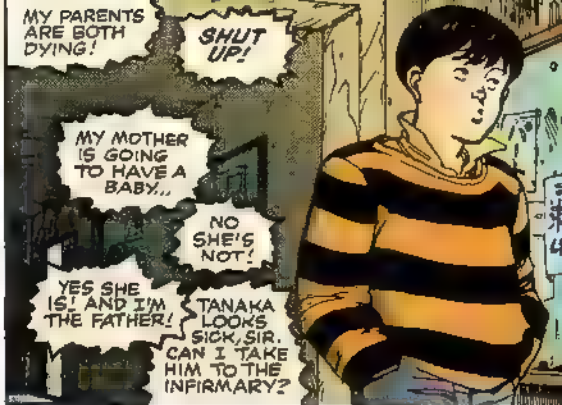
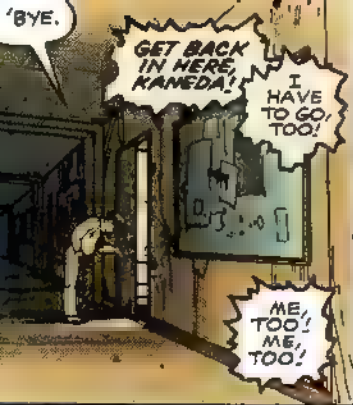
Indeed, there are some  
...even



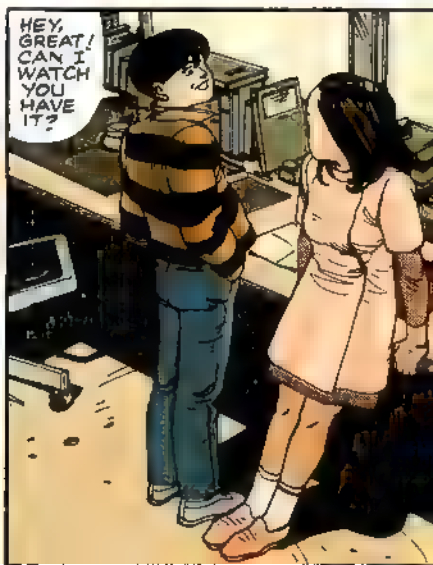
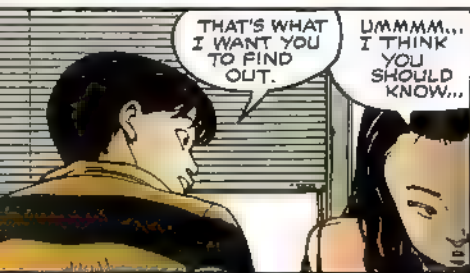
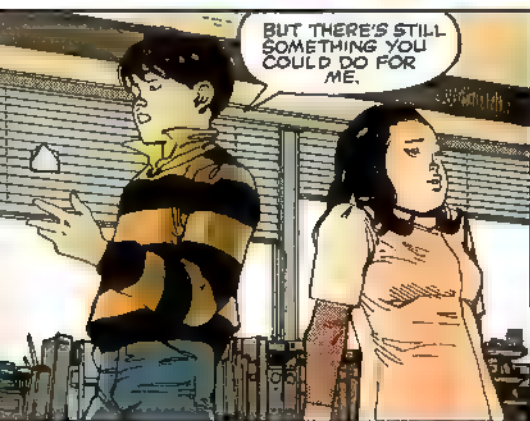


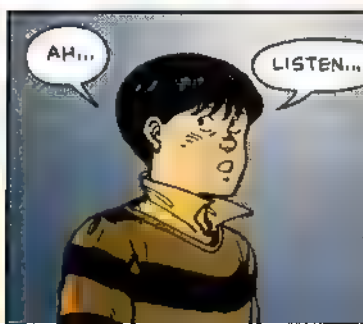
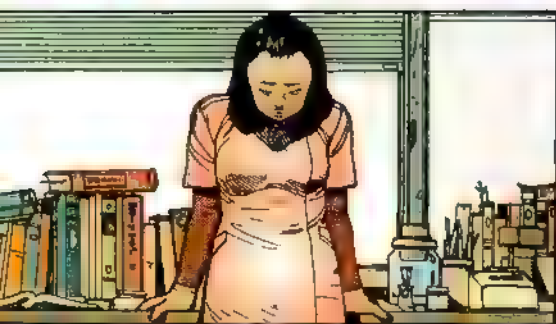
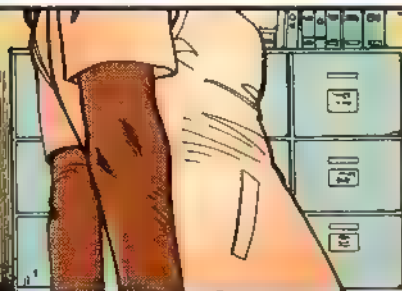
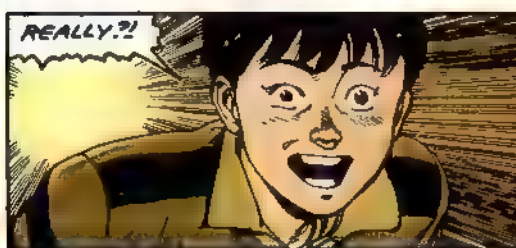
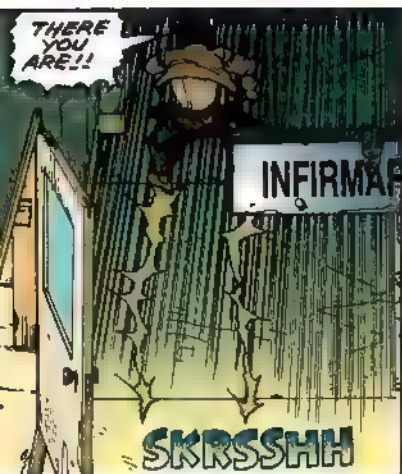
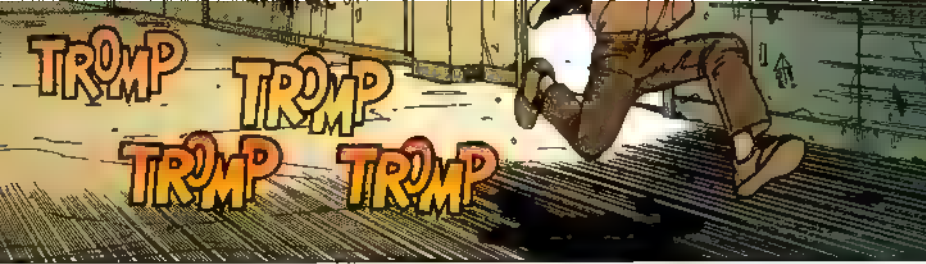










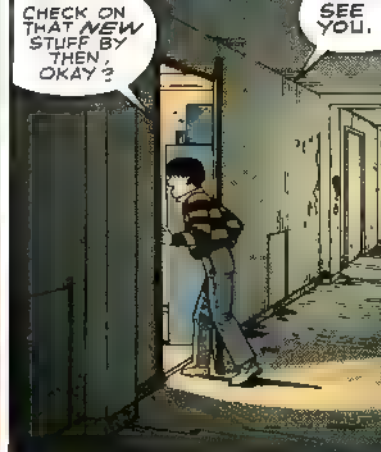




I'LL BE BACK LATER FOR THE USUAL GOODIES



CHECK ON THAT NEW STUFF BY THEN, OKAY?



SEE YOU.

SIT DOWN THIS INSTANT!!

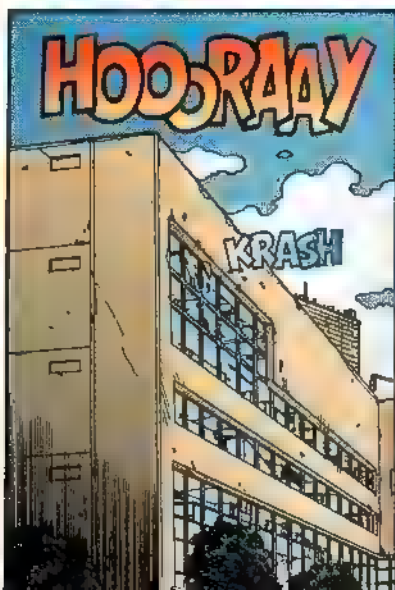
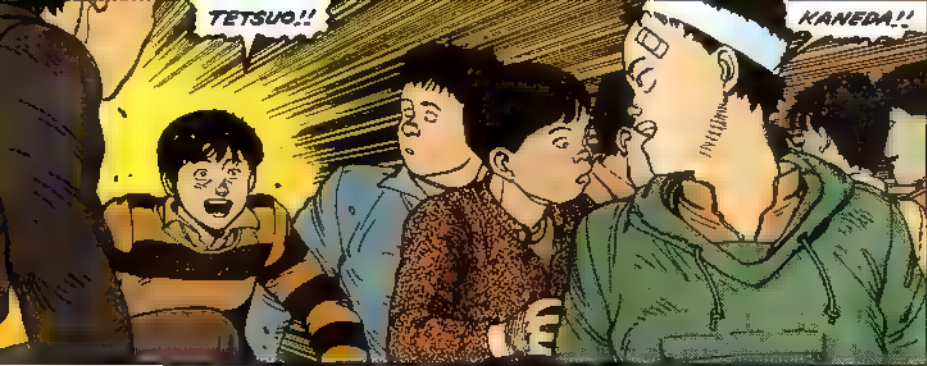


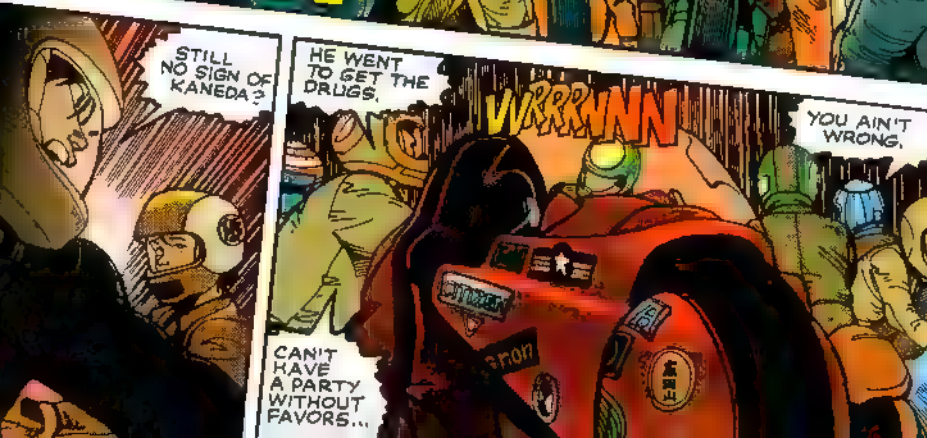
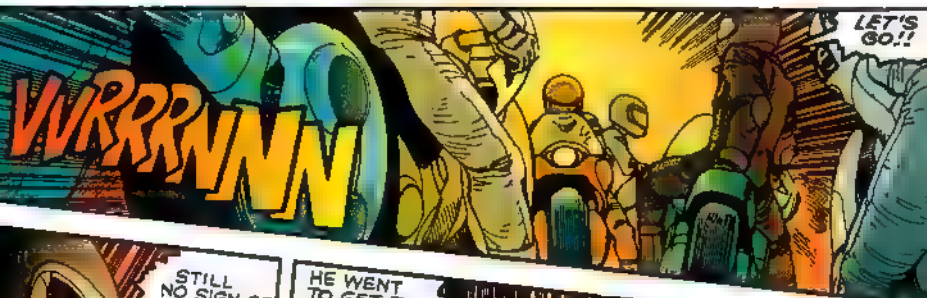
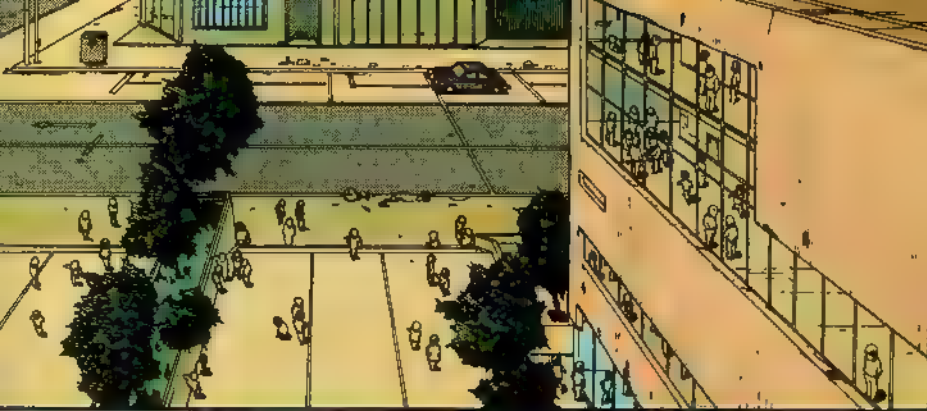
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

ARE YOU REALLY ALL RIGHT?

SURE. IT WAS JUST A SCRATCH.









WHERE DID THAT STUFF YOU GAVE ME EARLIER COME FROM?

DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT IT IS?

PART OF IT... BUT IT CONTAINED CERTAIN ELEMENTS THAT DEFIED ANALYSIS, AT LEAST BY OUR EQUIPMENT.



SO, DON'T KEEP ME IN SUSPENSE. THE GANG IS STILL WAITING FOR THEIR STUFF, YOU KNOW.

COMPARED TO WHAT WAS IN YOUR PILL THOSE ARE CANDY. ONE GRAIN OF THAT IS FIVE TIMES AS POWERFUL AS THE ENTIRE CONTENTS OF THAT BAG



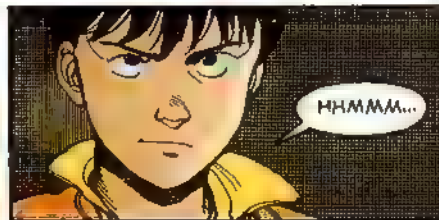
WHAT?



IF SOMEONE TOOK THE WHOLE THING, HE'D GO MAD... OR DIE.



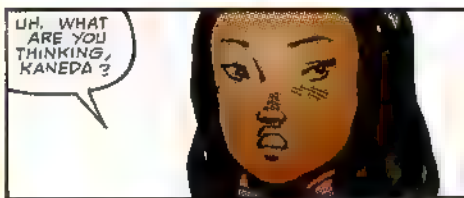
HHMMM...

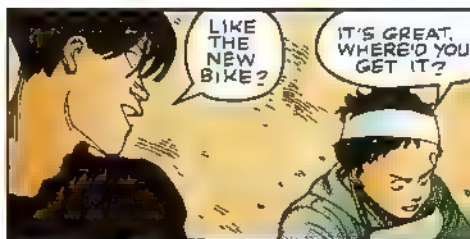
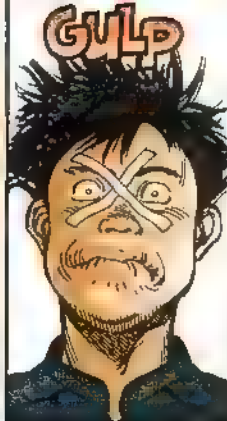


ONE MORE THING...

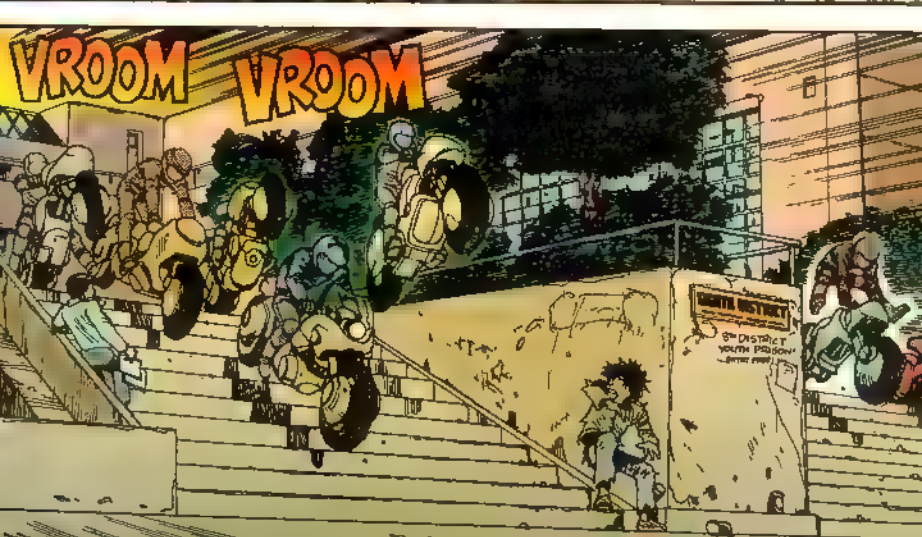
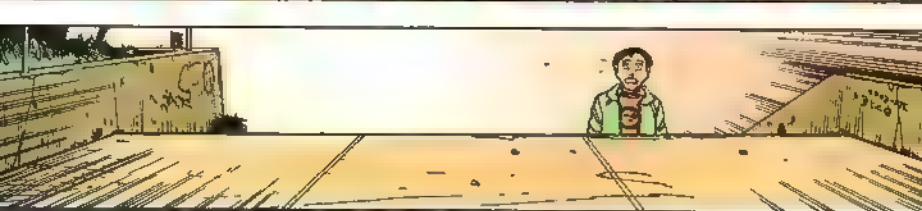




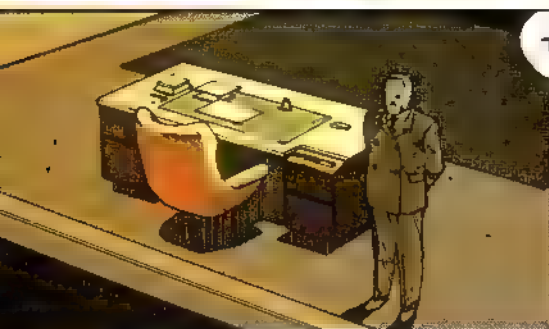
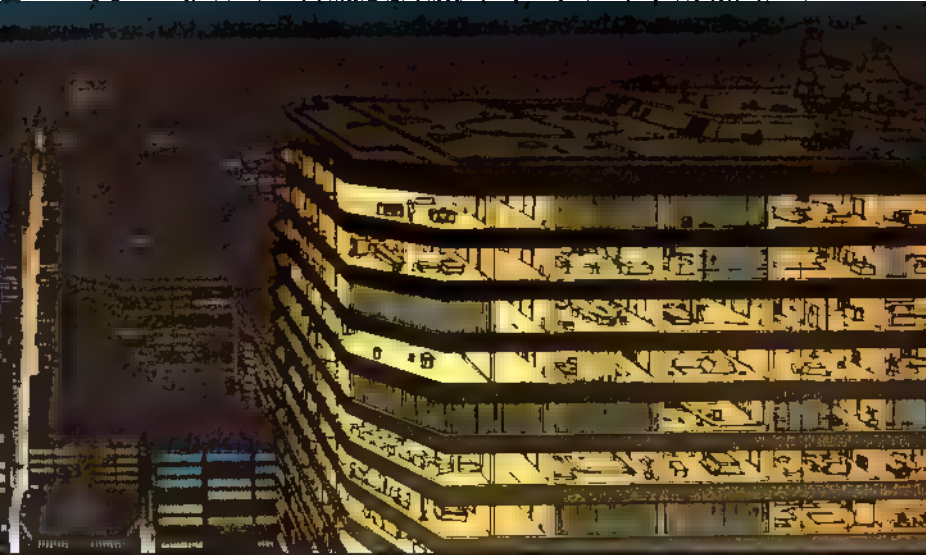




THOUGHT SO.







HIS NAME IS  
TETSUO SHIMA,  
COLONEL.



HE ATTENDS  
THE EIGHTH  
DISTRICT  
VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING  
SCHOOL.

AND  
HE WAS  
HURT..

... IN THE ACCIDENT  
TAKASHI CAUSED THE  
NIGHT HE ESCAPED...  
ON THE HIGHWAY IN  
THE OLD CITY..

BECAUSE IT OCCURRED THERE, WE HAD HIM BROUGHT HERE.

SOMETHING TURNED UP IN THE ELECTRO-ENCEPHALOGRAM.



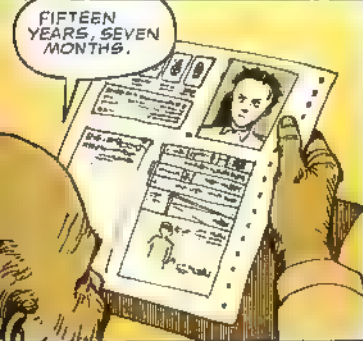
WE CHECKED AND RECHECKED IT. THERE'S A PATTERN TO HIS BRAIN WAVES I'VE NEVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE.



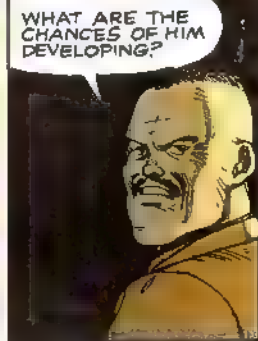
HOW OLD IS HE?



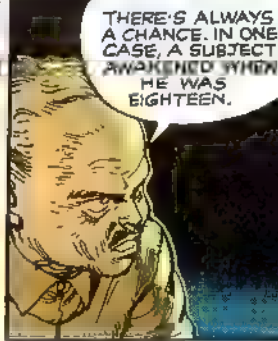
FIFTEEN YEARS, SEVEN MONTHS.



WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF HIM DEVELOPING?



THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE. IN ONE CASE, A SUBJECT AWAKENED WHEN HE WAS EIGHTEEN.



BY THE WAY, ISN'T HE OVERDUE?



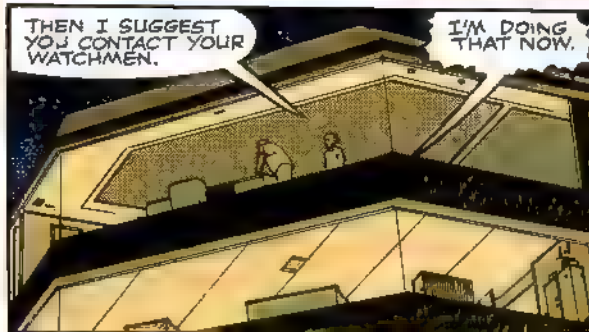
IS HE BEING TAILED?

NATURALLY!!

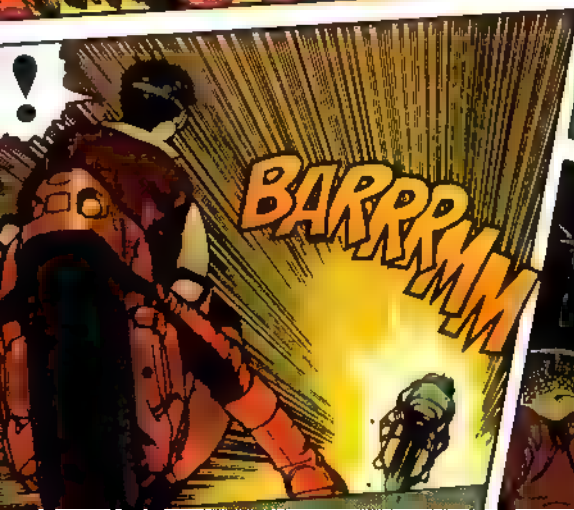
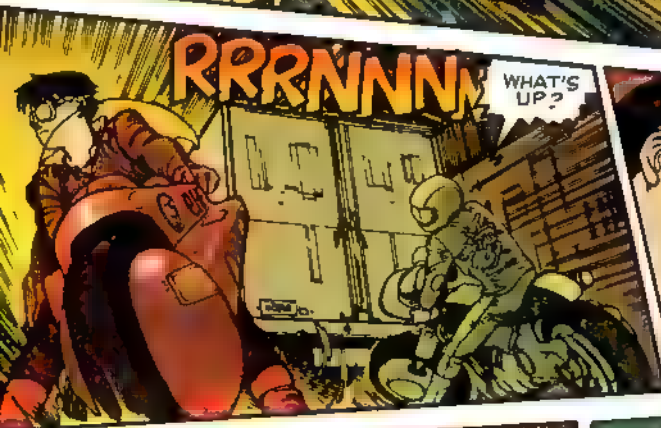


THEN I SUGGEST YOU CONTACT YOUR WATCHMEN.

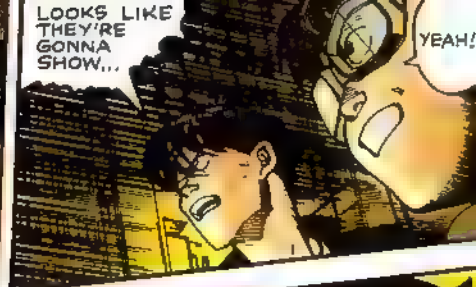
I'M DOING THAT NOW.

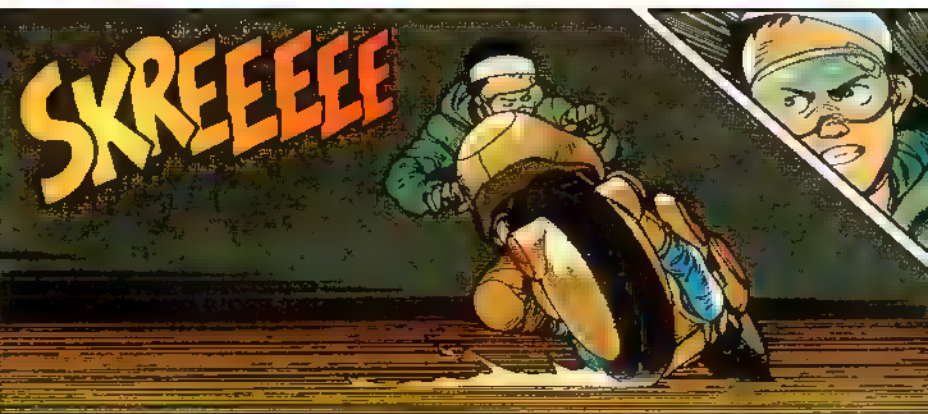
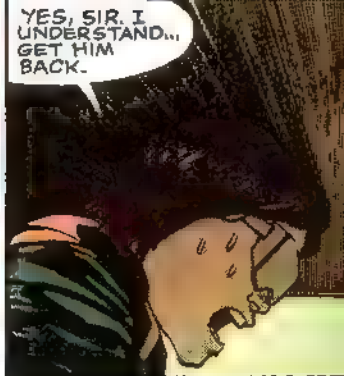


IT'S ALREADY EIGHT O'CLOCK.









## KATSUHIRO OTOMO

**T**he creator of **Akira** was born in April of 1954 in Japan's Miyagi Prefecture, an agricultural and fishing province some 400 kilometers northeast of Tokyo. He grew up there and attended Sanuma High School, which, for a rural school, seems particularly favored by the comic book muse. Another prominent comics artist, **Yoji Kamata**, is also a graduate, and, some years earlier, one of Japan's most famous comics creators, **Shotaro Ishinomori**, known world-wide for his **Cyborg 009**, **Kamen Rider**, and current best-seller, **Japan Inc.**

In high school, Otomo became, in his own words, "crazy about the movies." American films of the period in particular seemed to be capturing the new spirit of youthful unrest and rebellion all over the world. Movies such as **Bonnie and Clyde**, **Easy Rider**, **Five Easy Pieces**, and **The Strawberry Statement** had particular impact upon him at the time and some of their sensibility can still be detected in **Akira** and other work.

Soon after graduating high school in 1973, Otomo moved to Tokyo. His goal was to become a comics artist. He achieved this in August of 1973 when his first published work, an adaptation of the **Prosper Mérimée** short novel **Mateo Falcone**, appeared in the weekly comics magazine, **Action**.

Over the next few years, Otomo created a number of short stories in comics form. These would range from twenty to thirty pages, about the length of a full comic in the U.S. But in

Japan it is not unusual for an ongoing comics story to run to a thousand pages or more. Customarily, stories first appear in serialized segments of twenty to thirty pages in a weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly comics magazine and then, if popular, are collected into books of around 200 pages. During this period, Otomo's pieces were most regularly appearing in **Action** magazine. Later, they were collected into book form beginning with **Short Piece** in 1979. This collection was followed by **Highway Star** (October 1979), **Good Weather** (March 1981), and **Boogie Woogie Waltz** (May 1982).

Having achieved a promising degree of success and attention with these short works, Otomo began to apply his skills to longer material. In 1979, publication began on **Fire Ball**, a story built around a human versus mega-computer theme. Though it appeared in a limited circulation magazine and is, to date, still uncompleted, **Fire Ball** marked the beginning of Otomo's interest in the science-fiction action genre and established his following among high school and college students deeply addicted to the visual culture. **Fire Ball** was the natural forerunner of Otomo's two most acclaimed works, **Domu** and **Akira**.

**Domu** is a story centering upon the conflict between two residents of a modern day high rise apartment building. One is an old man, the other a little girl. Each possesses deadly psychic powers and their mounting duel has devastating consequences



for all around them. **Domu** began serialization in January of 1980 and continued for almost two years. When completed, it was revised by Otomo and issued in book form in August of 1983. **Domu** was an instant best seller as well as a subject of some controversy. It created a stir when it won Japan's science-fiction Grand Prix of 1983 for best s-f novel, the first time the prize had been awarded to a comics work.

The success of this 230 page graphic novel led Otomo to undertake an even more ambitious project which, when completed, would number some 1800 pages. As a place to launch this new work, he chose **Young Magazine** published by **Kodansha Ltd.** The bi-weekly magazine had been struggling to win the same high school-college student audience that Otomo perceived as the most aware and sensitive readership for the new directions he worked to achieve. The work was, of course, **Akira** and with its tradition-breaking appearance the circulation of **Young Magazine** began to rise. Today it is over one million. Each collected volume of **Akira** released in book form broke new ground in terms of format and price as well as in enthusiastic reader reaction. Four have appeared to date. The fifth and final volume is planned for Spring of 1989. When completed, the saga will have a total of three million copies in print.

Along with other comics work—such as **Sayonara Nippon** (Good-bye Japan), a tragi-comic story of a Japanese karate

expert's failed attempt to become a hero in New York, **Kibun-wa mo Senso** (Feel Like War), based upon an original script by **Toshihiko Yahagi** about a Japanese youth in China during World War III, and **Henzeru-to-Gureteru** (Hanzel and Gretel), a collection of parodies on **Grimm's Fairy Tales** and other classics—Otomo has remained interested and involved in film.

In 1982, he took about six months off to make his own sixteen millimeter film, **Jyu-O Warerani** (Give Me a Gun, Give Me Freedom). He produced it without any commercial backing, casting it with his own friends. When finished, it played at Kinokuniya Hall, a Tokyo theater for avant garde plays and films. Otomo has also continued to work in animated film as well as television commercials for such clients as Suntory, Canon, and Honda. Currently he has just completed the animated movie of **Akira** for which he acted as director, scenarist, designer and illustrator.

In Japan, there is a great deal of speculation about just where the title name of **Akira** originates (American readers have several issues to go before this character actually makes an appearance). There are those who assume it is homage to one of Otomo's favorite movie directors, **Akira Kurosawa**. Others have claimed it is the name of a drinking buddy of Otomo's from years ago. But Otomo himself never gives an answer. He just laughs. And the speculation, like interest in the series itself, continues to grow.

**KATSUHIRO OTOMO**

writer/illustrator

**YASUMITSU SUETAKE**

chief assistant to Mr. Otomo

**MAKOTO SHIOSAKI**

**SATOSHI TAKABATAKE**

assistants to Mr. Otomo

**HIROSHI HIRATA**

designer, AKIRA calligraph

**AKIRA SAITO**

designer, Kodansha edition

Kodansha Ltd.

**YOKO UMEZAWA**

with **LINDA M. YORK**

translation

**KOICHI YURI**

editor, Kodansha edition

**NORIYUKI OKAZAKI**

**YUKA ANDO**

editorial coordinators

Epic Comics

**JO DUFFY**

english adaptation

**STEVE OLIFF**

colorist

**MICHAEL HIGGINS**

letterer

**HECTOR COLLAZO**

**ED MAGALONG**

**ROBERT CAROSELLA**

production

**MARK CHIARELLO**

editorial assistant, Epic edition

**ARCHIE GOODWIN**

editor, Epic edition

**A**s earth recovers from World War III, strange new events are shaping in Neo-Tokyo. A pursuit has begun. Its object is a wizened face child with incredible telekinetic powers and the mark Number 26 on his palm. He holds clues to something prized and feared. Something or someone called...AKIRA. Two pursuers are the mysterious girl, Kay, and her companion, Ryu. Opposing them are troops of a secret government force. Swept along is the rebellious young motorcycle gang leader, Kaneda. Attracted to Kay and angry with Number 26 for the injury of a friend, Kaneda becomes part of the violent cat-and-mouse game which leads into the city's sewer system and a showdown with two new players...The Colonel and Masaru, Number 27.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

